**Syllabus - GOVT 2305   
Fall 2016, CRN 13153  
Spring Branch Campus   
Tuesday / Thursday 2pm – 4:50pm**  
   
**3 semester credit hours  
48 contact hours   
8 Week: October 17 - December 11  
Face to Face**   
  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Kevin Jefferies  
**E-mail**: kevin.jefferies@hccs.edu   
**OFFICE HOURS:** Please note that I am adjunct faculty and do not have regular office hours at HCC. Please see me before or after class for any issues you have, or email me to set up an appointment. Students are encouraged to schedule their meetings--phone and face-to face. E-mails and phone calls made after business hours will be returned the following business day. Please remember to leave a voice message if you call and clearly identify yourself (name, course name and number and the nature of your call).   
  
**GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT CHAIR**: Evelyn Ballard   
**E-mail:** [Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu](mailto:Evelyn.ballard@hccs.edu)  
Telephone: 713-718-2490  
*Note: if you have a problem with your Government course, please contact your instructor before contacting Dr. Ballard.*

**LEARNING WEB**: http://learning.hccs.edu/faculty/kevin.jefferies  
   
**COURSE DESCRIPTION**: Government 2305 focuses on the origin and development of the U.S. Constitution, structure and powers of the national government including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, federalism, political participation, the national election process, public policy, civil liberties and civil rights.  
  
**PREREQUISITE, CO-REQUISITE**: Must have passed ENGL 1301 (Composition I) or co-enrolled in ENGL 1301 as a co-requisite.

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES**:

2017-2020 HCC Government Program Student Learning Outcomes

GOVT 2305

\* Identify the structure, functions and nature of the institutions of the American national government.

\* Understand and describe the development, purpose and attributes of the US Constitution

\* Identify the policy making process and comprehend the outcomes of foreign and domestic policy in the United States.

\* Understand how political values and ideas are developed and expressed and the means through which one may engage in the political system.

\* Comprehend how media, interest groups, parties and the structure of the political system influence political participation.

**COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO)**

1. Identify and describe the institutions of American national government.

2. Recognize and assume the responsibilities of citizenship by developing one’s critical thinking skills, engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media.

**COURSE GOALS:** This course is designed to provide students with a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the structure, workings and practices of government at the state level. Additionally, the course is designed to help students develop the necessary intellectual skills to examine and critically evaluate the impact of government to society and understand how they can effectively engage in and influence the policy making process.  
  
**CORE OBJECTIVES:** The Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) mandates that the core curriculum must ensure that students will develop the essential knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college, in a career, in their communities, and in life. Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning. Students enrolled in GOVT 2305/2306 core curriculum courses will complete assessments designed to measure the following core objectives:   
  
- Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information  
   
- Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication   
  
- Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making  
  
- Social Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making   
  
Student assessment of proficiencies mandated by THECB may include testing, projects, or assignments. I will assess each with written assignments.  
  
**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: John G. Geer, et al. “Gateways to Democracy: An Introduction to American Government.” (ISBN: 978-1-285-85290-$)**   
  
*As you know, textbooks may often be found online through other vendors. However, if you exercise this option, please make sure you purchase the correct edition. You will need your textbook in a timely manner.*  
  
**COURSE CALENDAR**  
  
*Note: We will begin each day with a quiz over the assigned readings. I will make the quiz available online before class.*  
  
October 18 – Intro to class  
  
Part One – The Framework of American Government and Politics  
- October 20 - Chapter 1: Gateways for American Democracy and Chapter 2: The Constitution  
- October 25 - Chapter 3: Federalism  
- October 27 - Chapter 4: Civil Liberties  
- November 1 - Chapter 5: Civil Rights  
- November 3 - Test One  
  
Part Two – Political Institutions and the Political Process  
- November 8 - Chapter 6: Public Opinion and Chapter 7: The News and Social Media  
- November 10 - Chapter 8: Interest Groups and Chapter 9: Political Parties  
- November 15 - Chapter 10: Elections and Campaigns  
- November 17 - Chapter 11: Voting and Participation  
- November 22 – Test Two  
  
Part Three – Governing Institutions and Public Policy  
- Readings  
- November 24 - Thanksgiving  
- November 29 - Chapter 12: Congress  
- December 1 - Chapter 13: The Presidency and Chapter 14: The Bureaucracy  
- December 6 - Chapter 15: The Judiciary  
- December 8 - Chapter 16: Economic, Domestic, and Foreign Policy  
- December 10 – Review and Final  
  
Wrapping Up  
December 6 – Review  
December 8 - Final  
  
Paper Due – December 8  
  
**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:** As your instructor, I am committed to helping each of you achieve your academic goals. It is my responsibility to provide each student with a firm foundation of knowledge related to American government. This is a lecture course. Instruction includes the use of lecture materials, collaborative activities in the classroom, on-line interactive exercises and other supplemental resources as provided by the instructor.   
  
Discussion will be an important aspect of the course. It is my belief that discourse helps students move beyond memorization of the material and into critical analysis and evaluation of the concepts and theories examined in the course. You will be involved in discussions with your classmates and your instructor. In order to contribute to these discussions, you will need to stay prepared by following the reading schedule, attending class regularly, submitting assignments on time, taking advantage of the supplemental resources provided by the instructor (including any enrichment exercises) and fully participating in every aspect of the course. In order to facilitate and encourage you to be prepared, we will begin each class with a small and informal quiz over the material. This is also meant to encourage and reward attendance since these cannot be made up. Ideally we can spend the bulk of time understanding how the assigned material applies to news events of the day. I think you will find that everyday items will be in the news that directly relate to that day’s subject matter. It can make the class useful to you as you attempt to understand current events and how they impact you. Hopefully it can also make the subject matter interesting.

**ASSESSMENTS**   
  
You will be evaluated in four ways in this class:   
  
- Mid Term Test – 25% of your final grade  
- Quizzes - 25% of your final grade  
- Comprehensive Final Exam - 25% of your final grade  
- 1000 Word Critical Essay - 25% of your final grade  
  
**Mid Term Tests:** There are two of these, one after each part of the class. They will contain 50 multiple choice questions.  
  
**Quizzes:** At the beginning of every class we will have a very informal quiz over that days’ material. The quizzes will be made available prior to class online. You can access them here. That should make them easy – hopefully. The purpose of the quizzes is twofold. First they are to spur discussion on the day’s topic. Second they serve as a way to reward attendance. You must be in class to get credit for the quizzes.  
  
**Comprehensive Final Exam:** This will be given on the last day of class. It will be composed of 100 multiple choice questions drawn from each of the chapters we cover this semester.  
  
**1000 Word Critical Essay:** In addition to the presidential election, the November election will determine who controls Congress, which in turn helps determine what will be on the congressional agenda when the 115th Congress convenes next January. I want you – over the course of the class – to develop a specific topic related to the upcoming session of Congress. We will discuss the range of possibilities in class. At the end of the semester I want an objective (not opinionated) well researched critical analysis of some aspect of the campaign, election, or whatever strikes your fancy. We will work on it over the course of the semester. The last day of class I want you to turn in hard copy with at least three sources, in a format of your choice. You may write as much as you like, but it must be at least 1000 words long.   
  
**GRADING SCALE:**   
90-100 = A   
80-89.9= B   
70-79.9= C   
60-69.9= D   
0-59.9= F   
  
**LATE SUBMISSION/MAKE-UP POLICY:**   
  
**Quizzes:** There will be NO make-ups for quizzes (no exceptions). The quizzes also serve as the class roll, so please make every effort to regularly attend class and to arrive on time. I will drop the lowest two quiz grades. I will not drop low written assignment grades.  
  
**Tests:** The instructor reserves the right to determine the legitimacy of a student’s excuse for missing a test. If a make-up test is granted, the test may consist largely of essay questions. There will be no exceptions to this policy. I strongly discourage missing a test. Additionally, all makeup exams will be administered the last week of regular instruction. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor about a missed exam.   
  
**USING THE TEXTBOOK:** It is important that you follow the reading schedule. While it may be tempting, do not fall behind on your reading or wait until right before a test to study. To avoid becoming overwhelmed with the material, pace yourself by maintaining the reading schedule as printed. The textbook is complementary to the supplemental readings, assignments and your personal note taking. Ensure your personal success in the course by staying prepared and engaged!  
  
**HCC POLICIES**  
  
**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA STATEMENT):** Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office (713-718-5422) at the respective college at the beginning of each semester. Faculty is authorized to provide only the accommodations requested by the Disability Support Services Office. For questions, please contact Donna Price (District) at 713.718.5165 or one of the Disability Counselor at Northwest College, Dr. LaRonda Ashford at (713) 718-5408 or Lisa Parkinson M.Ed. at (713) 718-5422. To visit the ADA Web site, please visit: www.hccs.edu then click “Future students,” scroll down the page and click on the words Disability Information.   
  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 requires that institutions have policies that protect students’ rights with regard to sex/gender discrimination. Information regarding these rights are in the HCC website under Students-Anti-discrimination. Students who are pregnant and require accommodations should contact any of the ADA Counselors for assistance.  
  
**STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** It is important that every student understands and conforms to respectful behavior while at HCC. Sexual misconduct is not condoned and will be addressed promptly. Know your rights and how to avoid these difficult situations.

Log in to [www.edurisksolutions.org](http://www.edurisksolutions.org) Sign in using your HCC student e-mail account, then go to the button at the top right that says **Login** and enter your student number.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY, PLAGIARISM AND COLLUSION:** I will follow HCC policy for any and all academic dishonesty, plagiarism and collusion. Any form of cheating, including plagiarism, will result in a zero (F) for that particular graded activity. You may also receive a grade of (F) for the course. Identified instances of cheating will also be reported to the college and could result in administrative withdrawal. Please note that you will not be allowed to leave the classroom during the testing process.   
  
Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating on a test includes copying from another student's test paper; using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test; collaborating with another student during a test without authority; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test; or bribing another person to obtain a test that is to be administered. ‘Plagiarism’ means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work for credit. ‘Collusion’ means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit."   
  
For further clarification on what is considered academic dishonesty and/or cheating, in simplified terms it is (1) taking unchanged passages (or slightly edited) from another person's writing and portraying them as one's own; (2) submitting a paper that includes paraphrases of another person's writing without giving credit; (3) having someone else write your paper for you; (4) copying or using another person's work during in-class writing or testing; (5) the unauthorized use of electronic devices during in-class writing or testing; and (6) violating testing rules. Keep in mind also that whether you are cheating or not, not following testing or writing rules properly, such as communicating with your neighbor or using a cell phone during a test will be construed as cheating. This is not an exhaustive list of the forms of cheating on written work. If you are in doubt, consult your instructor.”).   
  
**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND HCC COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY**: Attending class regularly is the best way to succeed in the course. Research has shown that the single most important factor in student success is attendance. Simply put, going to class greatly increases your ability to succeed. You are expected to attend class regularly. You are also responsible for materials covered during your absences. Class attendance is checked daily. Although it is your responsibility to drop a course for non-attendance, the instructor has the authority to drop you for excessive absences. I reserve the right to withdraw students for low or no attendance.   
  
If you feel that you cannot complete this course, you will need to withdraw from the course prior to the final date of withdrawal. HCC policy provides that students may be dropped by the instructor after missing more than six hours of class time. If you don’t attend class and fail to withdraw from the course by the deadline, you will receive a grade in the course. For students who fail the course due to excessive absences a special grade will be assigned (see Non Attendance and Failure to Withdraw Policy for details).   
  
The last day that you may be withdrawn from the course is October 28 (Please double check though). After this date, you will receive a grade (not a W) in the course.   
  
**NON ATTENDANCE AND FAILURE TO WITHDRAW:** If you do not attend class (actively engage in the course) and fail to withdraw by the deadline, you will receive a grade of “FX” in the course. A grade of “FX” is failure due to lack of attendance, which is a distinction from an “earned” grade of “F”--failure due to poor performance. Students who withdraw by the deadline will receive a “W” in the course instead of a grade.   
  
**ADDITIONAL REQUIRED WITHDRAWAL POLICY (STATE OF TEXAS POLICY):** Students who take a course for the third time or more must now pay significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. At HCC it is an additional $50 per credit hour. If you are considering course withdrawal because you are not earning passing grades, confer with your instructor/counselor as early as possible about your study habits, reading and writing homework, test-taking skills, attendance, course participation, and opportunities for tutoring or other assistance that might be available. Also, the state of Texas has passed a new law limiting new students (as of Fall 2007) to no more than six withdrawals throughout their academic career in obtaining a baccalaureate degree.   
  
**HOW TO DROP**   
  
•If a student decides to withdraw from a class upon careful review of other options, the student can withdraw online prior to the deadline through their HCC Student Center.   
•HCC and/or professors may withdraw students for excessive absences without notification (see Class Attendance below).   
•Students should check HCC’s Academic Calendar by Term for withdrawal dates and deadlines. Classes of other duration (flex-entry, 8-weeks, etc.) may have different final withdrawal deadlines. Please contact the HCC Registrar’s Office at 713.718.8500 to determine mini-term class withdrawal deadlines.   
  
**IMPORTANT:** Students are now able to withdraw from one or more of their classes online. While it is still advisable that student receive good counsel from instructional and counseling faculty prior to dropping one or more classes, students will no longer be required to “see” someone before they will be allowed to drop. They will be provided information related to the implications and possible consequences of dropping their courses. The following will occur when a student selects the “drop” option during an enrollment request:   
  
• Students will be required to select a drop reason in order to complete the withdrawal request (the drop reason will cue whether the dropped course will count toward the 6 drop rule or not).   
• Students will be invited to click on several links to learn more of the implications of dropping on the six-drop rule (on veterans, on financial aid, and on international students): (http:// imc02.hccs.edu/gcac/drop.htm).   
• Students will be required to acknowledge the implications of withdrawing from a class. The last day for an administrative /student withdrawal is: Thursday, April 14.   
  
**HCC EARLY ALERT:** The HCC Early Alert Initiative is a college-wide effort to successfully retain students who are at risk of failing, withdrawing or dropping a course. This joint effort between Instruction and Student Services identifies students that are performing poorly in the classroom so that effective support services can be provided to the student.   
  
**PERFORMANCE EARLY INTERVENTION:** I am committed to helping you achieve your academic goals. If you find that you are not performing at a level you are pleased with, it is vitally important that you make every effort possible to seek assistance. Failing even one test may be detrimental to your final grade. If you do not perform well on the first exam, or you find that your quiz/assignment scores are weak, please see me immediately! Do not wait until the week before the final exam to turn things around!   
  
**CLASSROOM CONDUCT:** It is our shared responsibility to develop and maintain a positive learning environment for everyone. Adult behavior is expected. Disruptive behavior/ activities which interfere with teaching and/or learning will not be tolerated, and may result in an administrative withdrawal without refund.   
  
ALL electronic devices are to be turned completely off (see signs in classroom) during instruction. Note that “off” does not mean on vibrate. Please remember that ringing and buzzing phones and other devices are a disruption and interfere with the ability of others to learn. Additionally, please limit your use of laptops in the classroom for note taking purposes only. If your use of a laptop becomes disruptive to the learning environment, you will be asked to cease further use. Use of recording devices, including camera phones and tape recorders, is prohibited in classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and other locations where instruction, tutoring, or testing occurs. Students with disabilities who need to use a recording device as a reasonable accommodation should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities for more information.   
  
**INSTRUCTOR REQUIREMENTS:** As your Instructor, it is my responsibility to:   
♦ provide the grading scale and detailed grading formula explaining how student grades are to be derived;   
♦ facilitate an effective learning environment through class activities, discussions, and lectures;   
♦ inform you of any special projects or assignments Inform students of policies such as attendance, withdrawal, tardiness and make up;   
♦ provide the course outline and class calendar which will include a description of any special projects or assignments; and   
♦ arrange to meet with individual students before and after class as required.   
  
To be successful in this class, it is the student’s responsibility to:   
♦ attend class and participate in class discussions and activities;   
♦ read and comprehend the textbook;   
♦ complete the required assignments and exams: Ask for help when there is a question or problem; and ♦ keep copies of all paperwork, including this syllabus, handouts and all assignments.   
  
**DISCIPLINE REQUIREMENT:** Essential to the learning process in the social sciences disciplines is writing at the college level, meaning having the ability to produce clear, correct and coherent prose, adapted to purpose, occasion and audience. This includes not only grammar, spelling and punctuation, but the writing process itself. All graded assessments (in their totality) will meet and/or exceed this discipline requirement. \*\*The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any point during the summer. Students will be notified of any changes. \*\*